

Opening Statement of the Honorable Marsha Blackburn
Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade
Hearing on “IT Supply Chain Security: Review of Government and Industry
Efforts”
March 22, 2012

(As Prepared for Delivery)

I want to thank our expert witnesses for joining us as we examine vehicle safety provisions in the House and Senate highway bills. We're honored to have our colleague, Congressman John Lewis, Administrator Strickland from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), and several stakeholders whose industries and interests are central to today's hearing.

The American people believe the auto industry can grow and prosper, without diminishing our efforts to make our highways safer. These aren't mutually exclusive goals, and they don't need to be if we take the right approach. The history of the last two decades of highway safety demonstrates that industry-developed technology, combined with Federal oversight and enforcement by NHTSA, has continually reduced the number of fatalities to near record lows as collective vehicle travel rates continue to increase.

Transportation is fundamental to our everyday lives and highway safety deserves our special attention. The safety of our roads is important and it's in everyone's best interest. Interstate commerce, our economy, and families rely on the ability to travel safely in order to conduct business, earn a living, and carry out every day activities, such as getting children to school.

With safety always in the forefront of our minds, we ought to ensure our motor vehicle safety policies are framed in a way that ensures economic flexibility and efficiency for businesses, as well as regulatory caution and reduced uncertainty for the auto manufacturing industry.

- **Regarding flexibility and efficiency**, we know that America is a haven for innovators and that safety is something many consumers look for when purchasing a vehicle or traveling with a commercial bus or motorcoach company. Accidents on our roadways are not only an immediate danger to the passengers involved, but also a major setback for industry, potentially harming a small business's productivity, or a company's safety reputation, for years. It is in industry's best interest to incorporate safety features into their vehicles and business models, and in many cases they have the best expertise to understand how safety features will work and interact, how quickly they can be implemented, and whether they will be effective on the road. We need to think about the best ways to incentivize safety that makes sense and works for everyone. We need to be flexible and respectful of the processes that exist to better understand what works best for our safety, our economy, and our transportation systems.
- **Regarding caution and certainty**, we must exercise prudence before assuming the federal government knows best how to control everything. Simply placing more mandates and regulations on industry, especially without proven safety benefits, will not help us reach any of our shared goals for safe travel on our highways. It also means that

other more deserving work will be delayed or prioritized incorrectly. Let's avoid regulatory whiplash by narrowly targeting our efforts on true harms. Determining proven ways to make the biggest impact in reducing crashes on our roads needs to take precedence. At the same time, we need to understand what tools and resources can be offered to improve transportation safety without growing the size of the federal government and that place additional costs on consumers. Businesses need certainty and employees deserve to know their jobs aren't at risk because of ill-conceived federal regulations.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about their views on the state of safety within their respective industries, how safety might be improved, and whether there is a role for the federal government to help their efforts. With the recent passage of the Senate transportation bill, I am also interested to learn how provisions in the Commerce title of MAP-21 will affect safety, and any concerns our witnesses may have with the legislation as proposed.